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Chairman: Mr. Maurer ..... (Switzerland)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

Contents

Agenda item 132: Programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (*continued*)

Agenda item 146: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

United Nations Office to the African Union

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Agenda item 132: Programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (*continued*)

Agenda item 146: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

United Nations Office to the African Union
(A/64/762 and A/64/792)

1. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the proposed United Nations Office to the African Union (A/64/762), said that the Office would provide a single support structure for all United Nations personnel working on peace and security issues in Addis Ababa, thereby strengthening the interaction between the United Nations and the African Union and affording the United Nations a more cost-effective and efficient presence, as requested in General Assembly resolution 63/310. It would consolidate the operations of the United Nations Liaison Office, the African Union Peacekeeping Support Team and the United Nations Planning Team for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), along with the administrative functions of the Joint Support and Coordination Mechanism of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

2. Total resource requirements for the United Nations Office to the African Union were $10,642,000, comprising $8,875,900 to be funded from the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011, of which $1,203,600 was already included in the proposed budget for the support account for 2010/11, with $1,766,100 to be funded from the programme budget for 2010-2011, of which $1,109,500 was included in the approved programme budget for 2010-2011. The budget for the proposed Office represented a decrease of $2,489,700 from the total requirements for the Liaison Office, the Support Team, the Planning Team and the Support and Coordination Mechanism for the 2010/11 period and the biennium 2010-2011.

3. The new Office, to be funded from the support account and the regular budget only, would help improve transparency in funding arrangements and enhance efficiencies in staffing, with its 65 posts along with 11 posts for the Joint Support and Coordination Mechanism, compared with 104 posts for the four entities operating currently in Addis Ababa.

4. The General Assembly was invited to take the actions set out in paragraph 78 of the budget report.

5. **Mr. Zerihoun** (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs) said that the proposed Office would enhance the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding, peacekeeping and support. As part of that partnership, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union had, in 2006, signed the declaration on enhancing United Nations-African Union cooperation and framework for the 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union. In his report on support to the African Union peacekeeping operations authorized by the United Nations (A/64/359-S/2009/470), the Secretary-General had stated that integration of the various United Nations political and peacekeeping liaison and support offices in Addis Ababa would assist the Organization in developing a more effective peace and security partnership with the African Union. It was through that partnership that the United Nations had supported the African Union in building its human and institutional capacity in critical areas and in undertaking joint preventive diplomacy and peacemaking to resolve a number of crises in Africa. It had also assisted the African Union in building its peace and security architecture, including the African Standby Force, and had provided technical and expert advice to the African Union on the planning and management of the African Union Mission in Somalia.

6. The proposed United Nations Office to the African Union would address common challenges to stability and prosperity, by providing coordinated United Nations assistance to the African Union, and streamlining the United Nations presence in Addis Ababa.

7. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/310, which emphasized the need for measures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations and African Union cooperation; recognized the need to ensure an appropriate level of United Nations representation to the African Union, and recommended the continued consolidation of the field presence of the United Nations Secretariat at the African Union headquarters, the proposed Office would represent a strategic realignment resulting in improved capacity, and a stronger relationship between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security.

8. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/64/792), said that the Advisory Committee regretted the late submission of the report of the Secretary-General, which had put both the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly in the unfortunate position of having to consider the report under extreme time pressure. Yet the Secretariat had had seven months in which to prepare and submit its report. As the Advisory Committee had consistently called for a rationalized support structure to the African Union in the area of peace and security, it welcomed the proposal to consolidate the four entities in Addis Ababa in a single entity.

9. The report of the Secretary-General had failed, however, to address a number of issues. With respect to capacity-building, work on the long-term capacity-building road map had been on hold because the African Union had not yet articulated its requirements. Yet those requirements and the development of a related support plan were fundamental to the success of the capacity-building portion of the Secretary-General's report. In addition, the report did not provide sufficient information on the status of implementation of the peace and security aspects of the 10-year capacity-building programme, nor did it explain how the Economic Commission for Africa and the Office of the Special Adviser for Africa fitted into the proposed structure.

10. The staffing proposals for the new Office were somewhat difficult to understand and the clarifications provided in the Advisory Committee's report would help elucidate the proposal. The request for 32 support posts out of a total of 65 posts proposed for the Office was disproportionate. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Secretary-General should review the support requirements of the Office and report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

11. With respect to the remaining staff proposed for the Office, the Advisory Committee recommended against the Field Service post for the personal assistant to the Assistant Secretary-General, since that function could be performed by other staff. While three Political Affairs Officers posts had been proposed for the Political Affairs Unit, the Advisory Committee recommended the approval of two new P-4 Political Affairs Officer posts for mediation and conflict prevention and elections, and the abolition of an existing P-3 post of Political Affairs Officer proposed for reclassification to the P-4 level. If no new P-4 posts were established, the functions which had been proposed for the upgraded post could be performed by the P-5 Senior Political Affairs Officer and Head of Unit. Although it was unusual to abolish regular budget posts in the middle of the biennium, there was nothing that would prevent that technically.

12. The Advisory Committee expected the filling of posts to be aligned with the development of the capacity-building road map and the review of the 10-year capacity-building programme. It called for a progress report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session addressing the gaps in the current proposal by the Secretary-General and taking into account the Advisory Committee's comments.

13. **Mr. Coffi** (Côte d'Ivoire), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group regretted the timing of the submission of the report of the Secretary-General and agreed with the Advisory Committee that the Secretariat had had ample time to prepare its report. The Group welcomed the proposal to establish a new integrated United Nations Office to the African Union. That Office would consolidate the operations of the United Nations entities working on peace and security issues in Addis Ababa, thus allowing the United Nations to strengthen its interaction with the African Union and establish a more cost-effective and efficient presence in Addis Ababa.

14. The Office would coordinate with peacekeeping operations in Africa, namely UNAMID, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia. It would also coordinate with the United Nations special political missions on the continent, including the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, the United Nations Office for West Africa and

the United Nations Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic.

15. The Office would enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in Africa. Stronger cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union would help advance the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and peace and security across Africa.

16. The Group of African States reaffirmed its commitment to constructive engagement to ensure that the proposed Office was established at the current part of the resumed session, thereby complying with the instructions of the African Union Heads of State and Government concerning the reinforcement of the United Nations presence in Addis Ababa.

17. **Mr. Peralta-Momparler** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that even though the report of the Secretary-General had been submitted late, the European Union was prepared to accept its introduction, but only on an exceptional basis and without affecting its commitment to multilingualism. Nonetheless, given the limited time left before the end of the session, the Committee should give priority to consideration of peacekeeping operations. If there was sufficient time left thereafter, the European Union would show its customary flexibility in supporting the consideration of the report on the proposed United Nations Office to the African Union.

18. **Mr. Prokhorov** (Russian Federation) said that the late submission of the report made things extremely difficult for Member States. His delegation welcomed the proposal by the Secretary-General to merge the four offices of the Secretariat in Addis Ababa in order to streamline operations related to peace and security. However, the report violated the procedures established by the General Assembly for the consideration of budget documents, which would complicate matters for the consideration of future funding requests submitted by the Secretary-General and would not allow for rational funding of the Organization.

19. Reports should be submitted on time in order to comply with the important principle of multilingualism and to allow for careful examination of the proposals which they contained. In the case of the report of the Secretary-General before the Committee, there might not be enough time for its consideration, given the many other issues that needed to be addressed before the end of the second part of the resumed session.

20. **Mr. Tawana** (South Africa) said that while his delegation was concerned at the late submission of the report, it fully supported its introduction. The late submission of documents was nothing new and he hoped that the Committee did not want to send the signal that if a document concerned a particular region it could be treated with disdain.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.